METAPHOR AND METAPHILOSOPHY

Philosophy as Combat,
Play, and Aesthetic Experience

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.

—Ludwig Wittgenstein[1]

This project is concerned with contemporary philosophical activity, and the way in which one aspect of our language—metaphor—gives shape and boundary to the landscape around us. We have an opportunity to expand these limits of our world, our philosophical world, through attention to a particular set of metaphors: metaphors for philosophical activity. Drawing on a broad range of resources, from cognitive linguistics and hermeneutics to aesthetics and Chinese philosophy, this project intervenes in metaphilosophy, the field of philosophy broadly concerned with philosophy itself. I explore how the choices we make in philosophical language are deeply intertwined with what we think philosophy is and how it should be practiced.

Although metaphor and metaphilosophy are not often explicitly discussed together, it is actually quite difficult to talk about philosophy without using some metaphors. For example, many metaphors for philosophical activity appear in philosophical literature: combat, play, building,[2] agricultural cultivation,[3] traveling a path,[4] mining,[5] midwifery,[6] therapy,[7] and medicine.[8] In this project I examine three such metaphors in detail: combat, play, and aesthetic experience. The combat metaphor is particularly widespread, evident in common phrases such as "defending a position" or "attacking an argument." As I discuss in Chapter Two, despite the prevalence of this metaphor in western philosophical narratives, it is inadequate in certain ways that receive little scholarly attention.

I suspect that many academics today have had experiences with combative philosophers, and I want to be especially clear that this is neither an attack on a person, on a group of persons, nor on the combat metaphor itself.

Indeed, part of the point of this project is to suggest that we need different ways of thinking about what it means to be critical. We need to ask what it would mean to understand critique as something other than an attack; the inability or unwillingness to understand critique in non-combative terms demonstrates not only a lack of imagination but also a tendency toward question begging that assumes the primacy of combat metaphors. That said, I am not suggesting philosophy needs more "warm fuzzies," nor is this a cry for us to "just be nice" to one another. Rather, we are in a unique position—in today's globalized world at large and in the field of comparative philosophy in particular—to draw on the resources from many different traditions to shape practices of philosophy now and in the future. This is, in a very real sense, an intervention in (potentially) global and inclusive contemporary philosophical practices. I suggest we can learn from and integrate a variety of methods and metaphors in order to make our own practices even better and to match more closely what philosophers actually claim (to want) to do.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Chapter One opens with an examination of the importance of metaphors in thinking and understanding, drawing on resources from contemporary cognitive linguistics, hermeneutics, and Classical Chinese philosophy. From each of these three perspectives, metaphors—not linguistic ornamentation but deep conceptual structures—are crucial to how thinking and understanding work. These three perspectives represent very diverse traditions, and point toward a common emphasis on the importance of metaphor to thinking and understanding. This, in turn, should suggest that both philosophical and metaphilosophical projects need to pay careful attention to metaphors—if thinking proceeds metaphorically, then so does thinking about thinking. Furthermore, the chapter argues that there is a necessarily comparative component to metaphilosophical inquiries. The chapter concludes by asking after potential ethical implications of these metaphilosophical inquiries.

Chapter Two begins with a discussion of combat as a metaphor for philosophy—I defend my argument and attack yours, I look for weaknesses as points of attack, try to shore up my argument against counterattacks, and seek victory over my opponents. When we use combat to understand philosophical activity, we shape it in specific ways. On a combat metaphor:

1. Philosophers become adversaries or combatants.
2. The structure of the philosophical activity becomes one of strategic maneuvering, where the movement is conceived in terms of attack, defense, retreat, counterattack, stalemate, surrender, and victory.

3. The purpose of the dialogue becomes *victory*—to win and defeat the opponent.[9]

The chapter looks to the roots of this metaphor in ancient Greece, arguing that a specific set of socio-historical conditions led to the prominence of combat as a way of understanding philosophical activity. The next section of the chapter looks briefly at early Chinese philosophy, where although discussions of war are common, combat metaphors are not prevalent, and examines the one school that did use combat metaphors—the Mohists.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of several ways in which combat is inadequate for understanding philosophical activity: it leads to an internalization of violence, a narrowing of the possibilities of discussion, a covering over of power relations, certain difficulties concerning meta-level critique, and problematic relationships between combat, violence, and civil discourse.

Combat is not the only metaphor for philosophy—philosophical activity is also often understood as a kind of play. The third chapter begins by briefly providing some conceptual boundaries between the realms of combat, games, and play. It then proceeds to explore the philosophical concept of play, using Hans-Georg Gadamer's account of play to consider the play metaphor. Given certain problems with this account, however, the chapter moves on to consider an account of play drawn from the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, and how these two accounts together can provide a domain from which to build the play metaphor. Understood as play, philosophical activity takes on the following appearance:

1. Philosophers become play-mates or players.
2. The structure of the activity becomes one of play, a to-and-fro renewing repetition, where possibilities are always underdetermined.
3. The purpose of the activity becomes the activity itself: the medial sense of play takes priority.

However, there is also a sense in which play structures philosophy in a direction that is not entirely adequate. While it is desirable for one to be fully absorbed in play, to the point of forgetting oneself, philosophical activity requires a degree of self-reflexivity that needs both absorption in and distance from the activity.

The fourth chapter is broadly organized around the question: what would it mean to use aesthetic experience as a metaphor for philosophical activity? It is divided into two parts: an exploration of aesthetic experience and an articulation of the philosophical activity as aesthetic experience metaphor. The first section begins by exploring the nature of "experience" in aesthetic experience, drawing on Gadamer's notion of the negativity of experience. It then proceeds to a discussion of the role of aesthetic distance as a condition

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for the possibility of aesthetic experience. It first develops Edward Bullough's notion of aesthetic distance, and then builds on this using the ideas of *guan* 觀, *he* 和, and *ying* 應 from early Chinese aesthetics. Finally, the first section of this chapter articulates the triadic structure of aesthetic experience in terms of the necessary relationships between artists, works of art, and participants.

The second section of this chapter begins by thinking through the implications of aesthetic experience as a structuring field for philosophical activity—what does it mean to talk about the negativity of experience in terms of philosophy? What is productive about suggesting distance as a condition for philosophical activity? And what would it mean to suggest that philosophy also has a triadic structure: philosophical artists, works, and participants? Understanding philosophical activity as aesthetic experience shapes it in the following ways:

1. Philosophers become artists and/or participants with works of art.
2. The structure of the activity becomes one of artistic creation and engagement.
3. The purpose of the activity becomes understanding and appreciation.

The chapter then proceeds to discuss how the aesthetic experience metaphor responds to the criticisms offered in the previous chapters of the combat and play metaphors, and what is distinctive and unique about this metaphor in terms of the way it structures how we understand the key philosophical activities of coming to an understanding, solving a problem, and engaging in critique. Finally, the chapter concludes by looking at certain twentieth century critiques of aesthetic experience such as those articulated by John Dewey and Berthold Brecht, and offers suggestions for how the aesthetic experience metaphor might respond to these critiques.

The Epilogue closes out the book with some suggestions as to the implications of the project. It draws connections between the arguments in the book concerning metaphor, demographics in professional philosophy, and philosophical education. It also raises some questions about dharma combat in relation to philosophical activity.

NOTES

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* 5.6. trans. C. K. Ogden (London: Kegan Paul, 1922/Ebook by Project Gutenberg, 2010) 74. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/5740/5740–pdf.pdf.
2. See Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, esp. Part II.
3. See the *Mengzi*.
4. See the *Analects, Zhuangzi*.
5. See Descartes, also see Zhu Xi, *Zhuxi Yulei*.

6. See Plato, *Theatetus*.
7. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*.
8. See the *Majjhima Nikaya Sutta* No. 63.
9. See Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 80–81. This is also born out by Lloyd and Sivin's work on how the adversarial nature of Greek society impacted the practice of philosophers.

Chapter One

Metaphor and Metaphilosophy

We may note one peculiar feature of philosophy. If someone asks the question what is mathematics, we can give him a dictionary definition, let us say the science of number, for the sake of argument. As far as it goes this is an uncontroversial statement . . . Definitions may be given in this way of any field where a body of definite knowledge exists. But philosophy cannot be so defined. Any definition is controversial and already embodies a philosophic attitude. The only way to find out what philosophy is, is to do philosophy.

—Bertrand Russell[1]

When Bertrand Russell writes that any definition of philosophy "already embodies a philosophic attitude," he is noting a key feature of philosophy. That feature is the fact that the understanding of what philosophy is and the activity of philosophy are inextricably linked. How we speak of, conceptualize, and understand philosophy is intimately related to how we conduct philosophical activity because it is necessarily self-reflexive. Thinking philosophically involves thinking about thinking, engaging our understanding of what it means to understand ourselves and the world around us.

This self-reflexivity is also turned by philosophers onto their own philosophical activities—thinking about philosophical thinking, or metaphilosophy. Metaphilosophy has traditionally been concerned with investigating the nature, goals, and methods of philosophy.[2] The field usually involves questions such as what is philosophy? What are the borders between philosophy and other disciplines? What methods do philosophers use in different historical and cultural situations? What are the aims and goals of philosophy? I argue here that thinking involves metaphor, and as a kind of thinking about thinking, philosophical activity must involve metaphor as well. Likewise, thinking about philosophical thinking—metaphilosophy—must also involve metaphor. Not only do these activities involve metaphor, but their metaphors

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are not simple ornamentation. Metaphor, as is argued in what follows, is a necessary part of how we think, and we cannot understand what philosophy is without it.

As noted in the opening quotation, metaphilosophical inquiries are not independent from assumptions concerning the nature of philosophy. An holistic understanding of philosophy requires metaphor—the components of philosophical activity do not sum up to the whole; there is a remainder that needs integrative, rather than analytic[3] thinking, in order to be understood. However, we can, for the present purposes, identify certain important features and activities of philosophy. I approach philosophical activity inclusively, as conceptual clarification, as the process of thinking about thinking, and as an inquiry into how we understand ourselves and our experiences. This activity consists in the use (in varying degrees) of many different resources, including reason, argument, dialogue, analysis, and imagination.[4] In general terms, we might say that philosophy is a critical pursuit of deeper understanding regarding questions, topics, and themes central to human concern. It is often understood as loving and/or pursuing wisdom; both becoming aware of and engaging with questions of who we are and how we make sense of our worlds. This description is intentionally broad, as it seeks to include philosophical conversations across traditions.[5]

THREE ARGUMENTS FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF METAPHOR IN METAPHILOSOPHY

Why do our metaphors for philosophy—how we understand philosophy—matter to doing philosophy? There are (at least) three different sources for arguments concerning why metaphor is part of metaphilosophical inquiries: 1) Cognitive linguistics and the role of metaphor in concept formation; 2) Hermeneutic metaphoricity, and the role of metaphor in understanding understanding; and 3) Metaphor as seen in correlative thinking in early Chinese philosophy. These three arguments are drawn from a pool of sources that would support the claim that thinking necessarily involves metaphor. Many elements of twentieth-century philosophical critique that bridge the classical divide between rhetoric and philosophy—existentialism, phenomenology, American pragmatism, feminism, post-modernism—would also be valuable resources for thinking through these issues. Cognitive linguistics and hermeneutics, drawing from two very different traditions of critique, were chosen because they are exemplars of this argument. The Chinese tradition, as one standing outside of the western tradition for most of its formative period, provides an important balance point to these primarily western arguments.

Cognitive Linguistics and Conceptual Metaphor

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that "Metaphorical thought is the principal tool that makes philosophical insight possible and that constrains the forms philosophy can take."[6] They are operating from within a perspective of contemporary cognitive linguistics, which is "a conglomerate of more or less extensive, more or less active centers of linguistic research that are closely knit together by a shared perspective."[7] It arose in the latter half of the twentieth century as a result of reaction against syntactic and generative theories of language like those proposed by Noam Chomsky. The shared perspective of cognitive linguistics research is "simply that language is all about meaning."[8] Cognitive linguists elaborate four central tenets from this perspective: linguistic meaning is perspectival, dynamic and flexible, encyclopedic and non-autonomous, and based on usage and experience.[9] Cognitive linguists build their work around both linguistic theory and research into actual language usage, including scientific study into the relationships between language use and brain activity.

One of the main trends in cognitive linguistics research over the last thirty years has been research into conceptual metaphor. Lakoff argues that "A conceptual system contains thousands of conventional metaphorical mappings which form a highly structured subsystem of the conceptual system."[10] He further explains that

> In classical theories of language, metaphor was seen as a matter of language, not thought. Metaphorical expressions were assumed to be mutually exclusive with the realm of ordinary everyday language: everyday language had no metaphor, and metaphor used mechanisms outside the realm of everyday conventional language . . . [However] the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another . . . metaphor (that is, cross-domain mapping) is absolutely central to ordinary natural language semantics, and . . . the study of literary metaphor is an extension of the study of everyday metaphor.[11]

In other words, although theories of metaphor going all the way back to Aristotle relied on the assumption that metaphor was a special kind of language, Lakoff argues that when we examine closely how language—and so thought—functions, we find that metaphors are an intrinsic part of how we think. Metaphors, on this theory, are not improper naming (*à la* Aristotle), but rather are "mappings, that is, sets of conceptual correspondences."[12] These mappings are asymmetric and partial, and allow us to "understand a relatively abstract or inherently unstructured subject matter in terms of a more concrete, or at least a more highly structured subject matter."[13] Lakoff argues that these mappings are not arbitrary, but are in fact grounded in the body and in everyday experience and knowledge.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson are pioneers in bringing together the fields of cognitive linguistics and philosophy. They argue that our conceptual systems are coherent systems of metaphorical concepts,[14] where metaphors are the "understanding and experiencing (of) one kind of thing in terms of another."[15] Metaphors, on this account, are prior to the linguistic devices of analogy and simile—the way we think is structured through metaphors. In their recent work together, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, they expand on this idea in terms of metaphor as the conceptual mapping between a source and target domain. Examples of metaphors they discuss include "happy is up," "inflation is an entity," "time is money," "labor is a resource," and "love is a journey." They are concerned with the most fundamental of metaphors, those that make up our conceptual systems. Considering the "love as a journey" metaphor as an example, Lakoff and Johnson argue that one of the most important things to understand about conceptual metaphors is that they are used in reasoning: "[The] mapping allows forms of reasoning about travel to be used in reasoning about love. It functions so as to map inferences about travel onto inferences about love, enriching the concept of love and extending it to love-as-a-journey."[16] On their account, metaphors are inference preserving; they provide a slide for reasoning using one domain to be imposed on the second domain. Conceptual mapping structures the inference pattern of the second domain using that of the first, providing "a generalization over both inference patterns and language."[17] They argue that this process of conceptual mapping has occurred with most of our basic concepts, using results from contemporary cognitive science to ground their findings.[18]

In addition, they argue that not only are metaphors the basis of our conceptual system, but that most abstract concepts are made complex and meaningful through a process of conceptual mapping, or metaphorization. Again, considering the concept of "love" they argue,

> Take away all those metaphorical ways of conceptualizing love, and there's not a whole lot left. What's left is a mere literal skeleton...Without the conventional conceptual metaphors for love, we are left with only the skeleton, bereft of the richness of the concept...Without those conventional metaphors, it would be virtually impossible to reason or talk about love.[19]

Abstract concepts, then, are an especially powerful case of metaphoric structuring. In order to understand an abstract concept we require metaphorical ways of conceptualizing it. If we consider the "mere literal skeleton" of philosophy, we find activities of definition, argumentation, logic, and textual analysis. But even putting all of these bones together we are still left shy of an entire person—we have just the skeleton. In order to understand what philosophy is as a whole, we need metaphor—we need to be shown philosophy.

Now, what does this mean for metaphors in metaphilosophy? This gives us reason to think that the metaphors we use to describe, understand, and conduct philosophical activity are significant. Philosophical activity includes questions of how we conceptualize, think about, and understand our experience. Building on Lakoff and Johnson, we can say that it is the case that our experience is conceptualized to a large degree through metaphor; they argue that most of our conceptual system is built out of metaphors. In addition, our abstract concepts—much of the "stuff" of traditional western philosophical discourse—are largely made understandable and meaningful through metaphor. Because of this, philosophical thinking must proceed to some extent through the use of metaphor. In other words, if Lakoff and Johnson are correct in arguing that thinking and conceptualization are largely metaphorical, then the project of thinking about thinking—trying to understand what it is to think, reason, and conceptualize—also proceeds through metaphor. Thus, we cannot understand philosophy without inquiring into the metaphors for it.

Hermeneutics and the Metaphoricity of Language

Jean Grondin writes that "Hermeneutics is not the title of a philosophical project that aspires to complete understanding, but the name of vigilance in thought which rests on its absence."[20] While Lakoff and Johnson's work is premised on the evidence produced by contemporary cognitive linguistics, it shares certain conceptual parallels with the account of understanding given in Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, a defining work in twentieth-century hermeneutics. Gadamer argues that understanding is a kind of open-ended conversation, a process we engage in when confronted with a live question. In this process, we attempt to integrate the new or foreign material into our already existing conceptual framework. This integration is made possible by the finding of connections and commonalities between the new material and what is already understood—understanding takes place in language, and language is fundamentally metaphorical.[21] As Ron Bontekoe explains,

> Understanding occurs only when we recognize the significance of the various items that we notice—which is to say, when we recognize the way in which those items relate to each other. Understanding, then, is an essentially integrative activity... [in which things] we initially encounter as separate objects of perception, are now seen as *belonging* together.[22]

On Gadamer's account the process of concept formation is open-ended; we come to understand our concepts better and better by creating (mostly unconscious and implicit) connections between concepts, by finding similarities and commonalities, using what we already understand to further conceptual-

ize the object of the question at hand. The importance of this is also seen in his claim that a common language is necessary for conversation; in order to try to come to agreement with another person, we must negotiate between what we already understand and what the other person understands. As Gadamer writes, we follow our "widening experience, which looks for similarities, whether in the appearance of things or in their significance for us. The genius of verbal consciousness consists in being able to express these similarities. This is its fundamental metaphorical nature."[23] These similarities, however, are not expressed or understood as one thing being like another—analogies and similes are breakdowns of a more fundamental metaphoricity—but rather are expressed or understood as one thing in terms of the other. It is this conceptual sliding or overlap that enriches our concepts and expands our language.

For Gadamer, our understanding is not just a product of our personal lives, but is historically, culturally, and linguistically situated as a historically effected consciousness. This means that what we have already understood is structured not only by our personal experiences, but by traces of our tradition's historicity. This further explains why the process of understanding requires a "fusion of horizons," wherein the landscape of my understanding (the perspective from which I understand) must connect with and integrate the foreign material. That is, my understanding is shaped not only by me, but by my language and culture and all of those elements that become sedimented in how I understand myself and the world around me. This fusion, then, is not a simple "and"—my horizon and yours—but is a fusion in that I understand my horizon through yours, and yours through mine. Fusion implies change—my horizon must be altered by its encounter with yours, given new shape by understanding itself in terms of something else.

Gadamer argues that as I attempt to understand something, the "prejudices" (pre-judgments or anticipations of meaning, *"Vorurteil"*) formed by my horizon are brought into view in such a way that each new process of understanding requires me to engage my prejudices, rejecting some and accepting others. The process of understanding is a process of revision of one's initial projections, anticipations, and prejudices, as the object in question becomes better understood. Some prejudices prevent a given text, for example, from appearing as itself. However, as Jean Grondin explains,

> Gadamer is so reluctant to renounce the ideal of a critical elucidation of prejudices that he himself criticizes a Cartesian prejudice: the prejudice against prejudices! The expression, ingenious, presupposes that there are prejudices prejudicial to the understanding and that the prejudices against prejudices is part of it.[24]

For Gadamer, prejudices are an inherent part of understanding. The great question becomes how to identify those prejudices that are prohibitive and those that are beneficial. The metaphoricity of language is one locus of our prejudices—understanding one thing in terms of another brings with it antici-pations. Again, the meeting of the alien and the familiar in which we use the familiar to understand the alien *is* the metaphoric nature of language and understanding. It is also how language evolves, and the basis for the common understanding of metaphor as a literary device.

If the activity of philosophy is largely concerned with a pursuit of deeper understanding, then on Gadamer's account metaphilosophical inquiries can-not ignore metaphor; understanding uses metaphor, and so philosophy as a project of understanding one's understanding must deal with trying to under-stand metaphors. Additionally, these inquiries cannot ignore "dead" meta-phors—those metaphors that are not novel and no longer have the kind of emotional intensity we expect from literary metaphors. [25] Dead metaphors become lodged in the historically effected consciousness as traditional re-sources for conceptualization. In other words, they become the stuff of our prejudices, for philosophy as for anything else. Just as Lakoff and Johnson argue that the concept "love" is difficult to understand without metaphor, so we can see that the conceptualization of love as a journey is an historical, cultural, and linguistic process, whose recognition is important for appreciat-ing what about love is delimited by the metaphor. If we begin the process of understanding by engaging and revising our prejudices, then one of the things we need to pay attention to is the influence of dead metaphor on our thinking. The project of letting things themselves show themselves requires working out appropriate projections—putting our prejudices at risk. [26] There is no blank concept of philosophy not already influenced by metaphor; the project of trying to understand philosophy requires an inquiry into the meta-phoric structures already influencing the conceptualization of philosophy.

Early Chinese Philosophy and Correlative Thinking

In considering ancient Chinese ways of thinking and making sense of the world, noted sinologist Joseph Needham writes,

> For the ancient Chinese, time was not an abstract parameter, a succession of homogenous moments, but was divided into concrete separate seasons and their subdivisions. Space was not abstractly uniform and extended in all direc-tions, but was divided into the regions, south, north, east, west, and centre. And they joined together in the tables of correspondences; the east was indis-solubly connected with the spring and with wood, the south with summer and fire. [27]

The third argument for the claim that metaphor is important to metaphilosophical inquiries can be found when we consider early Chinese philosophy and language. After all, if the question is one of how we conceptualize philosophy, then two further questions emerge: who is the "we" and whose philosophy are we talking about? Looking to an alternate tradition both provides an additional perspective on the presuppositions of western traditions and helps the argument concerning contemporary metaphilosophy to take into account the multiplicity of philosophical sources available to contemporary scholars.

This project is situated in a lineage of comparative philosophy that takes very seriously the need for making careful, informed generalizations, both about "other" traditions and about "our" traditions. These generalizations are neither essentialist nor universalist, and seek to recognize richness, diversity, and flux while providing a more or less stable, heuristic vocabulary of cultural, linguistic, and philosophical assumptions from which traditions grow, based on the best available evidence. Roger T. Ames writes,

> In a sustained effort to allow Chinese philosophy to have its own voice, over the past century our best interpreters of Chinese culture have been struggling to construct an interpretive context for reading the canons. This interpretive context begins by clarifying the cultural presuppositions we are likely to bring to the Chinese texts, and then continues by attempting to articulate those uncommon assumptions that make Chinese cosmology distinctive and different from our own philosophical narrative. [28]

To attempt to frame a comparative project in light of cultural differences need not presuppose "essential" differences, cultural universals that do not admit of counterexamples, or cultural incommensurability. Rather, the recognition of cultural differences begins from the hermeneutic claim that any project of understanding or interpretation begins with certain anticipations that arise from our own horizon and the horizon of the text/tradition we seek to understand. Giving voice to these assumptions, as best as possible, is only a first step, and an always provisional one at that. Recognizing the need for careful, informed generalizations does not in any way diminish the need for detailed, specific analyses of particular texts, ideas, and practices located within their own traditions. However, each particular emerges out of and contributes back to a larger context or tradition, and the interplay between particular and general requires some provisional articulation of ambient cultural assumptions. In this project, as I attempt to move among and between metaphors and philosophies from different traditions, I employ some generalizations as first steps that make this sort of comparative project possible.

How does the early Chinese philosophical tradition aid in the argument for the importance of metaphor in metaphilosophy? First, we need to consider some of the distinctive features of early Chinese thought. As Nathan Sivin

argues, early Chinese philosophers were primarily concerned with the effectiveness of language, and the kind of rhetoric/logic divide found in early Greece "has no counterpart" in early Chinese thinking.[29] Angus Graham, in discussing the origins of Chinese philosophy in the Warring States period, notes that Chinese philosophy arose as "a response to the breakdown of the moral and political order . . . and the crucial question for all of them [Chinese philosophers] is not the Western philosopher's 'What is the truth?' but 'Where is the Way?,' the way to order the state and conduct personal life."[30] That is, the early Chinese thinkers were not particularly concerned with truth or argument for its own sake, or issues that split theoretical from practical concerns. Rather, their focus centered on finding, traveling along, and extending the *dao* 道, for their own time and place, finding optimal patterns and rhythms of conduct and experience to lead oneself and one's community to harmony. The descriptions of this activity—philosophy—gather around metaphors of finding and building roads or paths, channeling rivers, agricultural cultivation and biological metaphors such as birth and growth, and common activities of the noble persons of the time such as archery and charioteering.

While early western philosophers were often concerned (among other things) with questions of what is most real or true and how to know it for sure, early Chinese thinkers assumed that there was nothing more real than the constant cycles of change and persistence in the world around them. In discussing early Chinese ontological commitments, David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames write that the early Chinese philosophical worldview "entails an ontology of events, not one of substances . . . [and] every element in the world is relative to every other; all elements are correlative."[31] Chinese thinkers understood themselves and the world around them in terms of relationships of association and significant convergence—in terms of correlative thinking.

Sinologists and Chinese philosophers from Marcel Granet and Angus Graham to Roger Ames and Joseph Needham all discuss the importance of correlative thinking for understanding early Chinese philosophy. Correlative thinking is an aesthetic way of making sense and meaning of the world around one by means of metaphorical associations:

> From the perspective of correlative thinking, to explain an item or event is, first, to place it within a scheme organized in terms of analogical relations among the items selected for the scheme, and then to reflect, and act in terms of, the suggestiveness of these relations. Correlative thinking involves the association of image- or concept-clusters related by meaningful disposition . . . [it] is a species of imagination grounded in necessarily informal and hence ad hoc analogical procedures presupposing both association and differentiation.[32]

Although Hall and Ames here use the phrase "analogical relations" or "analogical procedures," in light of the reversal of priority between metaphor and analogy evidenced in both cognitive linguistics and hermeneutics, we might rather understand their point as one of metaphoricity—the understanding of one in terms of another, the finding of meaningful similarities and connections—instead of the more formal structure of analogy or simile: A is to B as C is to D, or A is like B in way C. Correlative thinking is operating at a deeper level than these formal analogical structures. Examples of correlative thinking include the vast tables of correlations discussed by the *Yinyang* 陰 陽 and Five Phases (*wuxing* 五星) schools. Some of these correlations can still be seen today. Consider for example the Jinshui Qiao (金水橋), the Gold Water Bridge, in the Forbidden Palace in Beijing. Gold or metal is the phase associated with the cardinal direction West, and the water flows into the Palace from the west. Hence, the river and bridge are named for this association. More philosophical, perhaps, is the notion of *xin* 心, usually translated as heart-and-mind. Understanding the heart-and-mind is understanding its function as a locus of activity—it is correlated as both the lord of the body and the host of thinking—that is inseparable from its context and its relations with other loci of activity in the body (organs and physiological systems), as well as the intrinsic connection between its activities of feeling and thinking. Joseph Needham argues that for the early Chinese philosophers, "The sum of wisdom consisted in adding to the number of intuited . . . correspondences in the repertory of correlations."[33] That is, correspondences—metaphors—were the repository of meaning, and thinking metaphorically in new and creative ways was the demonstration of wisdom.

An additional important example of the central role of correlative thinking in Chinese philosophy is the *Yijing* 易經, the *Book of Changes*. The text is composed of several different parts, some dating back to as early as Bronze Age China (Zhou dynasty).[34] The older section of the text (the *Zhouyi* 周易) is "a collection of oracular material for use when divining with yarrow wands."[35] It has sixty-four chapters, each with three parts: a hexagram, a hexagram statement, and six line statements. Each hexagram has six lines, each of which is either divided or whole, and an associated image or figure. Additionally, the text contains the *Dazhuan* 大專, the Great Treatise or Commentary, written much later than the *Zhouyi*, but greatly influential in shaping the early Chinese worldview: "the Great Treatise became the fundamental text for *Yijing* philosophy, a document whose principles came to permeate every field of Chinese thought for two millennia."[36] Richard Rutt explains:

> The fundamental principle employed by the Treatise is analogy, seen not as a mere device in logic or exposition, but *as a metaphysical principle*. Again and again the relationship between heaven, earth, man and the hexagrams is described as a continuum of macrocosmic-microcosmic parallels, intimately and

essentially interrelated, so that knowing a model in one plane enables a sage to know the corresponding model in the other planes.[37]

That is, this text, which became a repository for Chinese ways of understanding and relating to the world, is based to a large extent on what Rutt calls analogy, but what we might broadly construe as correlation or metaphor: "metaphoric activity has dominated the Chinese mode of correlativity."[38] This activity of correlation is metaphoric in that it is a way of making sense of the world in terms of associations—one event understood in terms of another.

Consider, for instance, the phrase from the *Yijing*: "一陰一陽之謂道."[39] This phrase highlights two of the most important heuristic metaphors in all of Chinese thinking: *yin* and *yang*, originally the shady and the sunny sides of a hill. These metaphors function to aid in organizing lived experience—they are not rigid, dichotomous classifiers (at least, not until after the Han Dynasty), but instead can be understood as flexible ways for making sense of a given situation. Consider, for example, the common association between *yin*, *yang*, and gender. Generally women are considered *yin*, and men *yang*. However, in a given situation involving physical strength, it is not out of the question that although I am a woman, I may be *yang* with regards to my grandfather. It is also important to note that *yin* and *yang* are always already involved with one another—any *yin* situation involves a bit of *yang*, and vice versa. Because change and transformation are the way in which the world is understood, even metaphorical categories such as *yin* and *yang* are always in process, transforming from one to the other in the fullness of time. This phrase, "一陰一陽之謂道," indicates that it is the movement between and alternation of *yin* and *yang* that is *dao*; way(s) or way-making, itself one of the most important metaphors in all of Chinese thinking, is composed of and by the cyclical engagement between sunny and shady and all that are organized by those metaphors.

The relationship between the three key textual elements of the *Yijing*: significance, image/figure, and text—in the terms of Three Dynasties philosopher Wang Bi, meaning, image, and words[40]—is a relationship of correlation, of metaphor, that is used as a heuristic for making one's life, situation, and experience significant and intelligible. Hall and Ames note that

> Imaging involves analogy in the sense that it requires a movement between a generalized situation made intelligible in a word and image, and the detail of one's own particular circumstances. And imaging has performative force. Meaning is not simply given; it is reflexively appropriated.[41]

They further argue that the activity of Chinese philosophy hinges on this metaphorical role of images—the thick image of Confucius created by the

text the *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects*), for example—and how these images are taken up productively in the life of the philosopher.

In the Confucian text the *Mengzi* 孟子 (*Mencius*), the metaphorical role of images is taken even further as a structuring component of Mengzi's style of argumentation, argument by analogy, which was widely used in the fourth and third centuries BCE. In D.C. Lau's article "On Mencius' Use of the Method of Analogy in Argument," he examines the flow of the argument in *Mengzi* 6A1, aiming to help contemporary/western readers follow the intricacies of the argument's various analogies. The passage he focuses on concerns the precise nature of *xing* 性, often translated as "human nature" or "natural human dispositions." The interlocultor in this chapter, Gaozi, suggests that *xing* is like a willow tree, and morality like carving cups from wood; or perhaps *xing* is like water, which will flow in any direction given the proper outlet. Mengzi replies by drawing out some problematic implications and assumptions made visible by these analogies—if *xing* is like the tree, then is morality a violent imposition on natural human tendencies? If *xing* is like water, is it not true that it would always tend to flow downward, given no obstacles?[42] This passage is one of many instances of argument by analogy in the *Mengzi*. Lau writes that "It is perhaps worth pointing out that the use of analogy is often the only helpful method in elucidating something which is, in its nature, obscure."[43] What we can see, after examining the role of metaphor in early Chinese thinking, is that the philosophical value of argument by analogy is a natural consequence of the prevalence of correlative thinking.

Metaphor is a central organizing component of correlative thinking, of making productive associations, and of the activity of philosophy in early China. However, this notion of metaphor is in some ways distinct from the notion of metaphor in the previous sections. Because, as mentioned earlier, the early Chinese thinkers generally saw their world primarily in terms of events, not things, and processes of change rather than stability, the interrelation of all events was an important assumption for these thinkers. This means that metaphor—correlative thinking—is not associating previously unrelated realms. As Bryan Van Norden notes in discussing metaphors in Chinese philosophy and western philosophy, there is

> a fundamental difference between Chinese and Western metaphors. Western metaphors typically draw a correspondence between two ontologically distinct domains . . . Chinese thinkers often assume what has been called a "correlative cosmology," according to which superficially diverse phenomena manifest the same qualitative patterns. Thus, 'the Chinese metaphor does not try to establish a parallelism between two domains, but rather wants to show that there is a *convergence* between them' . . . (136).[44]

In other words, because this way of understanding the world is premised on the interconnection of events and processes, the practice of finding and creat-

ing significant associations—metaphors—is that much more important in order for thinkers to make sense of their world.

Edward Slingerland is careful to note in his article "Meaning and Metaphor in Early China," that "Although metaphor and analogy do indeed play a foundational, irreducible role in early Chinese rhetoric, this dependence of image-schematic structures is by no means a unique feature of early China or 'the East'."[45] Slingerland, in addition to being a noted sinologist, is also a trained cognitive linguist and as such follows Lakoff and Johnson in asserting the foundational nature of metaphor for all cognition, regardless of the extent to which one tradition might claim otherwise. He writes that "what is unusual about early Chinese thinkers is not that they relied upon metaphor . . . but rather that they devoted a great deal of conscious attention to developing vivid and consistent sets of interlocking metaphors."[46] This conscious attention to metaphor in the form of philosophical activity is characteristic of early Chinese philosophers, and has serious implications for responsible interpretation of early texts, as Slingerland makes clear. Rather than examining specific metaphors in given arguments, however, our purposes here are focused on the more metaphilosophical issues surrounding the importance of metaphor on the Classical Chinese tradition's own account.

Furthermore, discussing the importance of metaphor for the Chinese tradition does not require making any essentialist claims about one tradition being metaphoric and the other not (classical western philosophy often self-identified as non-metaphorical). In making the point about the commonality of conceptual metaphor from cognitive linguistics (all persons, whether or not they admit it, cognize using conceptual metaphors), Slingerland may go too far. There are very real differences in the ontological commitments of early Chinese and early Western thinkers, and these differences do lead to genuine philosophical disagreements about the nature of language generally and metaphor specifically, and to genuine differences in *how* philosophical activity worked. These differences play out in terms of the emphasis on correlative thinking, the proliferation of arguments by metaphor used by early Chinese philosophers, and the structure of how philosophers engaged one another.

Chinese philosophy, then, supports the claim that thinking involves metaphor and that philosophical activity proceeds through metaphor. Because in early China the primary way of understanding anything, including philosophy, is through correlative thinking, which is at its heart metaphorical, both thinking about the world and philosophical thinking engage and require metaphor. Since the activity of philosophy, as seen from the *Yijing*, proceeds through metaphor, the inquiry into this activity must examine and assess the associations formed in it. In addition, as noted earlier, Chinese philosophers used and emphasized different metaphors for the activity of philosophy from their western counterparts. This indicates both a different understanding of

the activity of philosophy and the socio-historical contingency of specific metaphors for philosophical activity. The fact that different metaphors are used to understand philosophy indicates the importance of metaphor for metaphilosophy, the fact that no single metaphor is necessary in itself, and that metaphors arise from a particular time and place.

COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY, METAPHILOSOPHY, AND METAPHOR

The above sections provided three arguments for the importance of metaphor in metaphilosophical inquiries. Although the three traditions discussed have very different commitments and concerns, each supports the argument that metaphor (understood broadly) is a key part of how thinking and understanding proceed. As such, we can take as our starting point for further inquiry and analysis the idea that not only are metaphor and philosophy deeply interconnected, but that metaphilosophical inquiries require attention to the metaphors used for philosophical activity. In what follows, I consider the implications of this inquiry for comparative or cross-cultural philosophical projects.

"Interrogating" our Assumptions

As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons to make use of arguments from non-western traditions is their ability to point out unnoticed and ambient assumptions. In the article, "No (More) Philosophy Without Cross-Cultural Philosophy," Karsten Struhl examines one argument for the importance of cross-cultural (comparative) philosophy. He begins the article by suggesting that "Philosophy is a radical inquiry whose task is to interrogate the fundamental assumptions of a given activity, discipline, or set of beliefs . . . [it] must be able to examine not only the object of its inquiry but also its own method of interrogation."[47] Struhl argues that because one of the central tasks of philosophical inquiry is to examine assumptions, at least some philosophers must be in a position to put their own assumptions up for examination—not only their personal assumptions, but the assumptions at play in their philosophical "culture." Thus, cross-cultural or comparative philosophy[48] is necessary for philosophy as such to proceed beyond certain limits, as it enables philosophers to identify and critically engage assumptions that would otherwise be unavailable.

He notes the unfortunate fact that many professional philosophers are only well-versed in one tradition, and in fact that most philosophy majors (B.A.) have never had to encounter any non-western material. Although this is slowly changing, he writes that

it is still generally the case that comparative philosophers find themselves on the defensive, as they attempt to insert elements of non-western philosophical thinking into an essentially western philosophical curriculum. The point of this study is to urge comparative philosophers to go on the offensive, to challenge those who know only one philosophical tradition, and to insist that a philosophy curriculum that is not cross-cultural is fundamentally defective. [49]

As a specialist in comparative philosophy, I am deeply sympathetic to Struhl's argument, and I think he is successful in arguing for the importance of comparative philosophy to broader philosophical projects. This project is itself an attempt both to integrate various philosophical ideas from different traditions, and to use the interaction between traditions to highlight philosophically significant issues.

However, in giving a careful account of one reason why comparative philosophy is important, he (unintentionally) provides a clear example of why *comparative* philosophy is especially important for this project in particular. Note some of his language from the above quotations: philosophy's major task is *interrogation* and we need to examine our methods of *interrogation*; comparative philosophers find themselves *on the defensive*; the point of the article is to urge comparativists to *go on the offensive*. [50] The operant metaphor here is quite familiar—this is a combat metaphor, and combat metaphors pervade western philosophical discourse. They are so common as to be almost trite. It is quite possible that Struhl did not even consciously choose this metaphor to organize his argument—the metaphor is that ubiquitous.

On an account of metaphor like those discussed earlier in this chapter, most of our abstract concepts are structured metaphorically, and philosophy is no exception. Consider "interrogation." The dictionary definition of interrogation is to question, or to question formally. In contemporary parlance, "interrogation" conjures images of TV police dramas, lawyers cross-examining hostile witnesses, and most recently the "enhanced interrogation techniques" used for enemy combatants. Interrogation is not only the formal but forceful retrieval of information by someone who is in power from one who is not. It is something one does when in a combative situation, in order to help solve the case, catch the bad guy, or win the war. The issue here is not just word choice: interrogation, defense, and offense are all part of a larger, metaphorical network of explanatory vocabulary connecting philosophical activity with combat.

One of the things that a serious engagement with other philosophical traditions demonstrates is the very real difference in these kinds of operant metaphors—for example, the Chinese philosophical tradition, for the most part, did not use combat metaphors to structure philosophical activity. Comparative philosophers are in a unique position not only to engage in produc-

tive dialogue between traditions on first-order philosophical issues (Struhl's example in the article is a comparison between Indian Buddhist and Humean conceptions of the self), but also to be able to see some of these second-order metaphilosophical issues that may not be visible or seem remarkable from within a given landscape. As such, metaphilosophical projects cannot and should not ignore the need for interaction and engagement between philosophical traditions.

Implications of Metaphilosophical Metaphors

In the first half of this chapter, I argued that metaphors are not simple linguistic ornamentation, but are in fact important features of how we think, and so are very relevant not only to doing philosophy, but to doing metaphilosophy—asking questions about the nature of philosophical activity, or taking philosophy as its own object of study. In the previous section, I discussed the importance of comparative philosophy for identifying ambient assumptions, and I highlighted some phrases by Struhl that indicate his use (conscious or not) of a particular metaphor for philosophical activity. Beyond the philosophical and metaphilosophical importance of metaphors for philosophical activity, however, there are additional concerns that go along with this inquiry. In the article "Mastering Metaphors," Mary Tiles argues that certain generative metaphors highlight relationships between language and power—and what she calls the "war metaphor" is extremely prominent and powerful. The war or combat metaphor is not just a way of speaking. Our ways of speaking, no matter how innocent they may seem, are deeply involved with much larger concerns. What she calls the war metaphor has structured not only our languaging, but also our very ways of interacting with one another and our desires and aspirations for the future.

In terms of philosophical activity this is important because for much of its history, philosophy has been taken (or at least taken itself) as a height of human achievement. If philosophical activity has this place as part of an ideal toward which we strive, then how we understand it—and so the metaphors we use to describe it—will give shape to that ideal. In other words, the metaphors we use for philosophical activity matter not only internally to a given philosophical tradition but also to larger conceptions of what it means to be human.

There are at least two ways to make sense of this. First, given that metaphors structure how we think, they structure what kinds of questions we are interested in, how we formulate those questions, and how we answer them. They structure what makes a question a "good" question, and what makes an answer a "good" answer. As philosophy is centered on issues of deep human concern, the metaphors we use come to structure the very things we take to be of deep human concern, how best to respond to those issues, and as such

also shape what it means to be human. That is, the metaphors we use for philosophical activity play a key role in shaping how we understand the ideal human being and her relationships with others. Second, for much of its history, western philosophy generally has taken some element of reason or rationality to be a defining feature of human beings. Philosophy was the activity most associated with the use of reason or rationality, and so the activity most conspicuously human. The metaphors for philosophical activity, then, are by extensions metaphors for what it means to be human. Reason is an abstract idea made vivid through the use of a variety of metaphors, and the use of reason is likewise animated metaphorically through philosophical activity. So, when we use a metaphor like the combat metaphor, which shapes philosophical activity into a kind of war, then reason becomes a weapon and the wielder of reason a fighter.

In each of these cases, how we understand philosophical activity shapes what it means to be human in such a way as to have serious ethical implications. Tiles writes, "The power of a generative metaphor lies in the way in which it shapes social reality, and that reality then reinforces the metaphor, coming to make it seem particularly apt."[51] That is, there is a relationship between the metaphor and how we experience our lives such that, to return to Lakoff and Johnson's example, love really *is* experienced and understood as a journey. Our social reality and the aptness of a given metaphor are mutually reinforcing in such a way as to make it seem that some metaphors are so natural as to not really even be metaphors—and this is certainly also true of metaphors for philosophical activity. However, given that from a comparative perspective we can see that no one metaphor is necessary (there are many metaphors for this activity), we should ask: what is the value of any particular metaphor? Are some metaphors better than others in certain ways or in certain contexts? In the next chapter, I examine in detail one very prevalent metaphor for philosophical activity—the combat metaphor—and provide some arguments concerning its inadequacy.

NOTES

1. Bertrand Russell, *The Wisdom of the West* (New York: Crescent Publishing, 1989), 7.

2. The term "metaphilosophy" was initially used by Morris Lazerowitz in his 1970 article, "A Note on 'Metaphilosophy,'" in the first issue of the journal *Metaphilosophy*. In this article, he defines metaphilosophy as the investigation of the nature of philosophy.

3. "Analyze," c.1600, meaning "to dissect," from the French *analyser*.

4. Philosophers seem to have a more or less explicit agreement to disagree on the precise nature of what it is they do and how they see philosophy. This seems as true across the contemporary academy and Anglo-American/Continental differences as it is across the historical and cultural breadth of philosophers. However, we seem to have at least enough of a "family resemblance" to be able to share certain aims or goals in our activities. It is these shared aims and activities I am attempting to focus in on here.

5. Traditions, here, meaning not only cultural traditions such as Chinese philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, or American pragmatism, but also intra-cultural traditions such as Continental and Anglo-American philosophy.

6. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 7.

7. Dirk Geeraerts, "Introduction," *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings*, ed. Dirk Geeraerts (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006), 2.

8. Ibid., 3.

9. Ibid., 4–5.

10. George Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor." *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings*, ed. Dirk Geeraerts (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006), 232.

11. Ibid., 185–6.

12. Ibid., 191.

13. Ibid., 232.

14. For Lakoff and Johnson, concepts are neural structures we use to characterize and reason with our categories, and categories are the structures that differentiate aspects of our experience into discernible kinds. For more on this, see *Philosophy in the Flesh*, 19.

15. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5.

16. Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, 65.

17. Ibid., 66.

18. For more on this, see especially Chapters Four and Six of *Philosophy in the Flesh*.

19. Ibid., 72.

20. Jean Grondin, *The Philosophy of Gadamer*, trans. Kathryn Plant (Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 75.

21. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum Press, 2004), 428–9.

22. Ronald Bontekoe, *Dimensions of the Hermeneutic Circle* (New Jersey: Humanity Press, 1996), 2. My italics.

23. Ibid., 428.

24. Ibid., 84.

25. To prevent possible misunderstandings, dead metaphor in Gadamer is not the same as dead metaphor in Lakoff and Johnson. They reserve the term "dead metaphor" specifically for catachresis, and use the term novel metaphor to indicate "live" literary metaphors. Gadamer's dead metaphors are Lakoff and Johnson's metaphors in general.

26. Gadamer, 267, 292–93, 428.

27. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956/1991), 288.

28. Roger T. Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary* (Hong Kong/Honolulu: Chinese University Press/University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 24.

29. Nathan Sivin, *Comparing Greek and Chinese philosophy and science: Medicine, philosophy, and religion in ancient China* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Press, 1995), 3.

30. A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao* (Chicago: Open Court Press, 1999), 3. Many of the Chinese philosophical texts and ideas drawn on in this project are from the Warring States Period, prior to the arrival of Buddhist traditions in China.

31. David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), 15, 18.

32. David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Anticipating China* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 125.

33. Needham, 290.

34. For more on the details of provenance of the different parts of the text, see Richard Rutt's *Zhouyi: The Book of Changes*, Chapters One and Two.

35. Richard Rutt, *Zhouyi: The Book of Changes* (New York: Routledge Press, 2002), 26.

36. Ibid., 406.

37. Ibid., 406, my italics. Again, although Rutt uses the term "analogy," it is clear that he is not speaking of the linguistic device, but of a more fundamental metaphoricity of thinking.

38. Hall and Ames, *Anticipating China*, 135.

39. *Yijing, Xici Shang* (繫辭上 Great Treatise I).

40. For more on this, see the discussion of Wang Bi's text in Hall and Ames, *Anticipating China*, or Richard Lynn's *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi*.

41. Hall and Ames, 220.

42. For the complete passages, see *Mengzi* 6A. Mengzi obviously finds these implications to be so problematic as to demonstrate the undesirability of Gaozi's position.

43. D. C. Lau, "On Mencius' Use of the Method of Analogy in Argument," in *Mencius*, reprinted from *Asia Major* Vol. X, 1963 (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 226.

44. Bryan W. Van Norden, Review of Jean-Paul Reding's *Comparative Essays in Early Greek and Chinese Rational Thinking*. Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews, 2004. Accessed on February 1, 2011, from http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=4161.

45. Edward Slingerland, "Meaning and Metaphor in Early China." *Dao* 10(2011): 1–30, 2.

46. Ibid., 2.

47. Karsten Struhl, "No (More) Philosophy Without Cross-Cultural Philosophy." *Philosophy Compass* 5.4(2010): 287.

48. Struhl makes a distinction between "cross-cultural" and "comparative" philosophy. However, either of these are generally taken as acceptable nomenclature within the field.

49. Ibid., 287.

50. Ibid., 287.

51. Mary Tiles, "Mastering Metaphors." *Peace Review*. 10.4(1998): 522. We can remember that the war metaphor is a metaphor, and thus displaceable by others, but we also have to remember the deep entanglement of language with all forms of power.

Chapter Two

Philosophical Activity as Combat

[War] is a metaphor we live by; it structures not just the way we talk or think about things, but the ways in which we relate to one another, to the world around us, the ways we pose and seek to resolve problems; it shapes the ideas toward which we strive.

—Mary Tiles [1]

WHAT IS THE COMBAT METAPHOR?

Charles Dickens once wrote that "Philosophers are only men in armor after all." [2] The metaphor of philosophers as soldiers or combatants waging war against one another is one that has deep roots in many western philosophical narratives. This broad metaphor—philosophical activity as combat—shows itself in a wide range of expressions and practices: I attack your position and defend my claim, you've won the argument, I destroyed my opponent's foundation, weaknesses are points of attack, philosophers are practicing mental *jiu jitsu*, sparring over ideas, grappling with an intricate argument, jousting with theories, and trying to capture the truth. The language in and around the practice of philosophy is saturated with transference from the combat domain to the philosophical domain. Consider the following examples:

- "Socrates: 'So if anyone attributes such unwise doctrines to Simonides, or to other revered and intelligent men like Bias and Pittacus, will you be my *comrade in arms* and *combat* the heresy? Polemarchus: 'I'll be your *comrade* and *do battle* at your side'" [3] (Plato's *Republic*)
- "Philosophy is a *battle* against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language." [4] (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*)

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- "We are all in the habit of directing the inquiry to our *opponent in argument*, rather than to the subject matter in question."[5] (Aristotle, *On the Heavens*)
- "First-year undergraduates are initiated into the discipline of philosophy by being taught *to gun down* the arguments of the great philosophers, as if in a sideshow shooting gallery."[6] (Solomon, *The Joy of Philosophy*)
- "To understand it [philosophy] at the deepest level, the reader must adopt the stance of the intelligent and perceptive *opponent*, thus coming to understand the case the philosopher is trying to make. This is what we mean by reading *aggressively*."[7] (Oxford *Introduction to Philosophy*)

What do we mean by war or combat? One of the most influential discussions of the nature of warfare is in the treatise *On War*, written by Carl Phillip Gottfried von Clausewitz (1780–1831). Clausewitz was a Prussian soldier and intellectual, and his work on war remains at the heart of a contemporary western understanding of combat. He writes that "The most important thing in war will always be the art of defeating our opponent in combat."[8] Victory, for Clausewitz, is defeating the enemy: "What do we mean by the defeat of the enemy? Simply the destruction of his forces, whether by death, injury, or any other means—either completely or enough to make him stop fighting."[9] He argues that defeating the enemy involves three objectives: destroying the enemy's armed forces, occupying his territory, and breaking his will to continue to fight. Clausewitz is also famous for arguing that policy and politics are what drive war: "Policy is the guiding intelligence and war only the instrument, not vice versa."[10]

Building on an understanding of combat similar to Clausewitz's, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, in their early work *Metaphors We Live By*, explore what they call the *argument as war* metaphor, and how the mapping of war onto argument restructures our thought about philosophy. They argue that when mapped by combat, philosophical activity is understood in the following ways:

1. Participants in philosophical activity become adversaries.
2. The structure of the activity becomes one of strategic maneuvering, where the movement is conceived in terms of attack, defense, retreat, counterattack, stalemate, surrender, and victory.
3. The purpose of the activity becomes *victory*—to win and defeat the opponent.[11]

In other words, when philosophical activity is understood as a kind of combat, the relationships between participants and the nature and structure of the activity takes on features of combat. Whatever their relationship might have been, on a combat metaphor participants are pitted against one another, ad-

versaries or soldiers for different camps. They seek to think strategically, to outwit or outmaneuver their opponent(s), with the ultimate aim of securing victory. Winning the battle and defeating one's enemy is the point of engaging in the activity; philosophy, on this metaphor, is about victory for one's own position.

The Historical Situation

This metaphor is not a metaphor from nowhere—its roots in western narratives stretch back to at least ancient Greece, where a convergence of social, historical, and philosophical factors led to the prominence of this way of understanding philosophy. In what follows I make some generalizations about western philosophical traditions and the widespread use of combat metaphors. As I mention in Chapter One, careful and informed generalizations are very important, and in employing certain generalizations I do not intend to imply "essentialist" or "universalist" claims that would deny the presence of diversity; although there are other metaphors for philosophy that arise during the Greek period such as midwifery, medicine, statecraft, and charioteering, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the combat metaphor was in practice very prevalent.

The realms of philosophy and of combat, both so common in ancient Greek culture, came to be closely associated with one another. After all, in a city-state such as Athens there was no distinct soldier-class—in addition to their trade or craft (including statecraft), all citizens went through compulsory military service. This is perhaps the reason for the long association between military and civic virtues in Greek thinking; consider for example the important role bravery and cowardice play as exemplars in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Val Plumwood, in her work *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, argues for the relevance of "war, militarism and the values of militarism for Plato's thought and their strong connection with both reason and the master society of the Greek *polis*."[12] Greek society was in many ways built around the practice of war and the honor given to those who acquitted themselves well in battle. The association, then, between the war hero and the philosophical hero, between going to war and doing philosophy, between weapons of war and instruments of philosophy, becomes increasingly dominant: "Reason is the new weapon in the context of combat, the new basis of power."[13]

Historians Nathan Sivin and Geoffrey Lloyd, in their work *The Way and the Word*, argue that a particular socio-historical situation in ancient Greece led to the "combative" nature of good thinking.[14] To succeed as a philosopher depended on one's ability to be orally convincing, as philosophical activity was primarily a performance: "most intellectual exchange was in the oral mode."[15] One's livelihood rested on one's fame, which was decided in

the public forum. Most Greek philosophers and philosophical schools, they argue, were supported almost entirely based on fees from students and from those attending public lectures and performances. To win a debate was to gain in fame, leading not only to personal and professional fame but also to additional students, and so additional funding: "Argument and debate were . . . essential to the activity of the Greek schools in their competitions with one another both for pupils and for prestige . . . all sects acted as . . . alliances for defensive and offensive argument."[16] Lloyd and Sivin further argue that

> The chief preoccupation of the up-and-coming philosopher or scientist, in all periods of Greco-Roman antiquity, was not to find a rich patron but to make a reputation among colleagues, often by confronting them directly in argument. It is this that stimulated, even if it did not dictate, much of the strident adversariality that is such a feature of Greek intellectual exchanges.[17]

One made a name for oneself, to a large extent, by taking on other philosophers, whether they be of one's own school or not. There was very little concern with not attacking one's own lineage; indeed, one often made a bigger name for oneself by publicly defeating an elder member of one's own school.

The general adversariality of philosophical discourse is, at least in some way, a socially and historically located feature—a by-product, as it were, of the situation of the Greeks and the importance of Greek philosophy in western narratives. Lloyd and Sivin argue that "No one who has a philosophical or scientific idea to propose in any culture can fail to want to make the most of it. But a distinctive Greek feature was the need to win, against all comers, even in science, a zero-sum game in which your winning entails the opposition losing."[18] This predominance of adversariality made sense to the Greeks, not only because of their socio-historical situation but also because they saw combative reason as leading to the realm of certainty, a highly desirable goal for philosophy and one of the reasons this metaphor is so appealing.[19] After all, in a combat situation the person left standing at the end should clearly be the victor, and should be victorious because she is better than the opponent. Lloyd and Sivin quote from *On the Nature of Man*, an early fourth century BCE text on public debates, which states that "it is right for a man who says he has correct knowledge about things to be victorious in the presentation of his argument every time—if he really knows the truth and sets it out correctly."[20]

The idea that the truth will win out in the end, that the success of the victor is due to her being better than the defeated, translates in the context of the combat metaphor to the idea that a philosopher who can best another in philosophical combat is better than her opponent, and has the truth or a grasp

on the truth in a way her opponent did not. The philosopher who could defeat all her opponents, then, would be certain she had the truth—her truth would be unassailable and she would be, in Marcel Detienne's words, a "Master of Truth."[21] As such, a central organizing aim of philosophers was the pursuit of truth. Understanding philosophical activity as leading to certainty about who had the truth and what it was—victory in combat—was deeply compelling. As Lloyd and Sivin write, "Masters of Truth, in their endlessly confrontational milieu, had reason to make an issue of truth and defend their claims against all comers," and even Plato's reinterpretation of rivalry as rivalry for Truth is a rivalry for a truth that "could claim to defeat all rivals."[22] This goal of certainty, of unassailable truth, was a reflection of philosophers' desire to seek the certainty of truth found in mathematics: "In mathematics, the aim was strict demonstration, yielding certainty, incontrovertibility."[23] Lloyd and Sivin argue that this mathematical goal bled into other fields and arenas, and that proofs *moro geometrico*, which require both deductive arguments and self-evident truths, were seen as necessary for decisive victory. They further argue that "the way Greek philosophers and scientists formulated their focal problems reflected their perception of what would secure victory in that competition."[24] That is, the mapping of combat onto philosophy not only alters the languaging around philosophical activities, but also alters the very structures and strategies of the activity to correspond with combative strategies for victory.

Combat Metaphors in Chinese Philosophy

For many philosophers, combat is a very natural way of thinking about philosophy. The combat metaphor can seem almost like it is not a metaphor, but simply part and parcel of philosophical activity. And, the importance of Classical Greece as the location for many of the roots of western philosophical narratives can make it seem as though philosophy *is* Greek in some important ways. While there are many reasons to take seriously the predominant place and influence of Greek thinking in western narratives, it is equally important not to let the predominance of Greece imply that the Greek way is the only or the most natural way. In fact, one way to proceed is to identify important areas in which other traditions fruitfully diverge from the direction of Greek thought. Although Greek philosophers are not the only locus of combat metaphors—non-western traditions such as many in India also prioritize combative metaphors and methods for philosophical activity—classical Chinese philosophers are notable in generally avoiding combat metaphors and often advocating that people be *bu zheng* 不爭, that is, not contentious. This suggests that the combat metaphor is contingent, not necessary or natural.[25]

There are many important contrasts between Chinese and Greek tradi-
tions. When thinking about early Greece, one of the key features of philo-
sophical inheritance (post Aristotle) is the importance of logic as *the* vehicle
for attaining demonstrable truth, for getting at what is real behind the illusory
world of appearances. One of the consequences of this was a devaluation of
the rhetorical arts, which were seen to be persuasive rather than truth-seek-
ing. However, as Nathan Sivin argues, this divide between logic as the meth-
od of gaining truth and rhetoric as "has no counterpart" in early Chinese
thinking.[26] The processual cosmology favored by the early Chinese thinkers
inclined them to privilege semantics over logic and to consider language as
provisional but effective: "rather than in truth for truth's sake, the focus of
these texts lay in the best way (道) to lead one's person, family, and state to
order."[27] Instead of the model of philosophy as intellectual combat, "in Chi-
na the emphasis remained on consensus," and on continual (re)negotiation.[28]

While metaphors of combat for philosophical activity made sense to the
early Greeks for a number of reasons, as mentioned earlier philosophical
narratives in China were not particularly inclined toward combat meta-
phors.[29] Lloyd and Sivin note that "Although plenty of criticism in Chinese
texts is directed both at individual thinkers and at lineages . . . there was
generally a strong disapproval of open disputation."[30] That is, it is possible to
think about criticism in ways that are not directly combative. In his study of
moral epistemology in the *Xunzi* 荀子, A. S. Cua suggests that

> Argumentation [in early Chinese philosophy] is thus conducted in a context of
> common concern. It is a cooperative enterprise . . . Contentiousness betrays the
> lack of concern with a matter of common interest. Were contentiousness an
> appropriate attitude, argumentation would be more like a debate or an adver-
> sary proceeding rather than a serious undertaking among concerned and re-
> sponsible participants.[31]

As noted in Chapter One, Chinese metaphors for philosophical activity tend
toward those associated with traveling, agriculture, and the natural world.
Sarah Allen, in her work on metaphors in early Chinese philosophy, argues
that "the ancient Chinese turned directly to the natural world—to water and
the plant life that it nourishes—for the root metaphors of their philosophical
concepts."[32] Chinese philosophers often use metaphor in a very conscious
manner, and although most philosophers of the classical period discussed
war—during the Warring States period most philosophers were concerned
with the practical task of being taken seriously by someone in power so as to
respond to the horrors of constant warfare—it is intriguing that so few chose
metaphors of combat to illustrate thinking. This may be due in part to the fact
that general assumptions and thinking about combat at the time were very
different from their western counterparts.

Combat is a culturally situated concept, and the philosophical literature on combat differs widely across traditions. Francois Jullien writes that while for Clausewitz, "in warfare, the sole object of an engagement is the destruction of the enemy forces. . . . The ancient Chinese treatise on warfare recommends the exact opposite."[33] Chinese thinking is generally characterized by an emphasis on aesthetic order—the importance of each particular element in a holistic pattern. This is as true of military thinking as it is of discussions of morality or art. Roger Ames notes that "It is the ability of the leader to achieve 'harmony,' however it is defined, that is signatory of what it means to be a person of superior character, whether this harmony is expressed through communal leadership or through military prowess."[34] In other words, military thinking in early China is structured aesthetically, with an eye toward restoring harmony rather than conquest.[35] This harmony is a harmony between persons, families, ministers, states, and the cosmos at large.[36] This is not to say, however, that Chinese warfare (of the pre-Qin period, specifically) had any fewer casualties, or was any less brutal or inhumane than western warfare. Rather, this emphasis on harmony points to the role of aesthetic values in thought during this period and to the start of the divergences between a classical Chinese understanding of combat and a more traditional western understanding.

When discussing warfare in early China, there are many texts that are available as resources. Almost all early Chinese philosophical texts contain at least some discussion of warfare, from strategy and tactics to the behavior of generals and the need for an ordered government. However, the *Sunzi* 孫子 and the *Sun Bin* 孫臏 stand out as among the oldest and most widely studied military treatises in the world. The *Sunzi* originated as a text during the Warring States period (403–221 BCE) and is attributed to Sun Wu, a military commander who was roughly a contemporary of Confucius. The *Sun Bin* is attributed to Sun Bin, a later descendent or follower of Sun Wu. There is an important distinction between texts that address war or combat as subject-matter, and texts that use combat metaphors for philosophical activity. The *Sunzi* and the *Sun Bin*, although texts directly concerned with philosophizing combat, do not themselves use combat metaphors. These texts are particularly useful for our purposes here because they present a strikingly different picture of what combat meant to these early Chinese thinkers (and practitioners) from their western counterparts. Not only were the early Chinese concerned with aesthetic structuring, in terms of harmony, but warfare was explicitly understood as a last resort—if one had to go to war, one had failed in some important respect. The *Sun Bin* states: "You must go to war only when there is no other alternative."[37] War is not a glorified enterprise, but is seen as a project to be undertaken only when all the other means at one's disposal have been exhausted. This is a recognition of the extreme

costs of warfare, on the state, the soldiers, their families, crops and provi-
sions, trade, and morale. [38] Roger Ames writes that in classical China,

> war is justifiable only when all possible alternatives have been exhausted, and
> must be entertained with the utmost seriousness. . . . The first priority is the
> avoidance of warfare if at all possible. Once, however, a commitment has been
> made to a military course of action, the project becomes to achieve victory at
> the minimum cost. [39]

This idea of achieving victory at the minimum cost is connected with the
notion that in warfare, the enemy is to be encircled and brought into one's
own state, not destroyed outright. Jullien writes that Chapter Three of the
Sunzi "begins by laying down the following principle: 'In general, the best
way of proceeding in war is to keep the [enemy] country intact.' To destroy it
is not the best option." [40] At the point when one is committed to war, commit-
ted to victory, one is precisely committed not to the destruction of the enemy,
but rather to doing one's best to make sure that the enemy's state, infrastruc-
ture, lands, citizens, and soldiers remain as whole as possible.

This is a very different picture of combat than the one drawn by Clause-
witz. When this understanding of combat is used metaphorically, it connotes
and structures its target domain in distinct ways. And, although few philoso-
phers chose combat metaphors for philosophical activity, early Chinese
thinkers did use their own combative metaphors for other fields such as
medicine. [41]

There is one notable exception to the general Chinese preference for non-
combative metaphors: the Mohists. Mohism is a school of thought that rose
to some prominence during the latter part of the Warring States period. Its
founder, Mo Di 墨翟 (also known as Mozi 墨子, Master Mo), most likely
lived in the latter half of the fifth century BCE, and after his death the school
split into three branches of organized Mohist schools that had some popular-
ity in the fourth and third centuries BCE, but which did not survive the Qin
Dynasty purges. [42] The Mohists were famous for their tenet of inclusive care
(*jian ai* 兼愛, often translated as "universal love"), their denouncement of
aggressive warfare, and their skill as defensive war contractors, among other
things. Unlike the other philosophers of their time, they came mainly from
backgrounds of craftsmen and tradesmen, not nobility, and their work evi-
dences certain concerns not found in most other early philosophical schools;
their texts (what remains of them) were "deliberately theoretical," and fo-
cused on logic and language and the role of certainty or necessity: "They [the
Mohists] discover in disputation a certainty (*bi* 必) invulnerable to time, the
logical necessity of which is eternal." [43] Disputation (*bian* 辯), the mode of
philosophical activity for the Mohists, "is concerned . . . with deciding